

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

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APPROVED BY EB THOMAS O. ENDERS

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 227368 TOSEC 130064

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP KISSINGER, HENRY A. ENRG, IT

SUBJECT: ITALIAN INTEREST IN SAUDI PIPELINE PROJECT

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ENDERS

1. DURING YOUR SEPTEMBER 22 MEETING WITH RUMOR, HE ASKED FOR USG SUPPORT FOR ITALIAN EFFORTS TO WIN A \$1 BILLION SUBCONTRACT TO SUPPLY STEEL PIPE FOR A MAJOR SAUDI PIPELINE-REFINERY-PETROCHEMICAL COMPLEX BEING PUT TOGETHER BY BECHTEL AND MOBIL. MANZINI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY, RAISED THIS WITH ME EARLIER THIS MONTH. HE REFERRED TO OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATION IN ROME (ON WHICH I REPORTED TO YOU) CONCERNING THE URGENT NEED FOR THE MORO GOVERNMENT TO DEMONSTRATE DOMESTICALLY THAT IT HAS THE INTERNATIONAL CLOUT NEEDED TO OBTAIN LARGE MIDDLE EASTERN CONTRACTS WHICH WILL GENERATE EMPLOYMENT IN ITALY.

2. THIS IS PART OF THE MORO GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL STRATEGY TO BOLSTER ITS CREDIBILITY AND IMAGE OVER THE NEXT CRITICAL MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE ANTICIPATED CABINET CRISIS NEXT YEAR. THEY SEEK OUR SUPPORT NOT ONLY IN THEIR COMMERCIAL DEALINGS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
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BUT ALSO THROUGH ITALY'S INCLUSION IN ALL MAJOR INTER-

NATIONAL MEETINGS AND THROUGH A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR COMMITMENT TO THEIR NUCLEAR POWER PROGRAM. (I AM SENDING YOU A SEPARATE MEMORANDUM ON THE STATUS OF OUR BILATERAL NUCLEAR TALKS WITH THE ITALIANS.)

3. I HAVE SPOKEN WITH GEORGE SHULTZ ABOUT THE ITALIAN INTEREST IN THE SAUDI PROJECT. HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE INDICATION OF OUR INTEREST AND PROMISED TO CHECK WITHIN BECHTEL AS TO HOW THE ITALIANS SHOULD FOLLOW UP. I AM TRYING TO CONFIRM THAT THERE ARE NO US FIRMS BIDDING ON THE CONTRACT FOR THE PIPE. THIS HAS OBVIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF UNOFFICIAL SUPPORT WE CAN OFFER THE ITALIANS.

4. AS SOON AS I HEAR FURTHER FROM GEORGE SHULTZ, WE WILL PREPARE A REPLY FROM YOU TO RUMOR. ROBINSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, IRON, SALES, FINANCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PETROLEUM PIPELINES, LOANS, CAT-B
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE227368
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: SWBOSWORTH:LS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850040-2315, N750004-0621
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750921/aaaaaslh.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL; SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <17 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ITALIAN INTEREST IN SAUDI PIPELINE PROJECT
TAGS: OVIP, ENRG, US, IT, MOBIL OIL, (KISSINGER, HENRY A)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006